

# USBCC

Magazine of the United States Ballpen Collector's Club

Spring 1992

Vol. 1, No. 2

## Imagine a Pen

not much longer than your cigarette! ... yet it opens up to a full size pen!



HUMPHREY BOGART, starring in  
"KEY LARGO", a Warner Bros.  
Production.

Humphrey Bogart says, "I carry my Kimberly with me all the time. You can't beat it for instant, smooth, trouble-free writing."

This Kimberly Pockette is a new EVERSARP writing wonder! When closed -- it's little longer than a cigarette. Drop it in any pocket, in vest, coat, trousers. It won't leak - it can't. When opened it's a full size pen -- with full ink supply. It *rolls* ink on *dry* ... writes on and on and on without refilling. Its velvet-smooth point is so precision-fashioned that you can write *at any angle!*

You'll want this Kimberly Pockette by EVERSARP no matter how many pens you own! It's so convenient, so amazingly smooth-writing. Handsomely styled in your choice of he-man solid colors.

With 14-K gold-filled band, only \$7.50 ... (tax included).  
With Chrome band, only \$4.95 (no tax). Buy your  
Kimberly Pockette by EVERSARP now.

**K**imberly  
POCKETTE  
by EVERSARP

P.S. Buy one for your wife ... in feminine high fashion colors.

©1948, Eversharp, Inc.

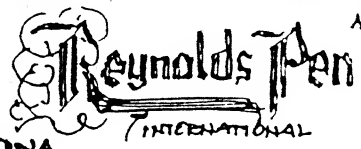
# BALLPOINTS

OCTOBER 29, 1945. / 1ST AMERICAN BALLPOINT

MILTON REYNOLDS, CHICAGO

FEBRUARY, 1946

① REYNOLD INTERNATIONAL PEN BALLPOINT.

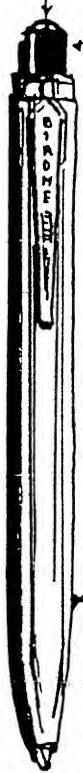


ALL-ALUMINUM.

② 1ST RETRACTABLE BALLPOINT BIROME PEN / ARGENTINE IMPORT.

IMPRINT (ON BARREL) INDUSTRIA ARGENTINA BIROME

PUSH LASZLO BIRD, INVENTOR

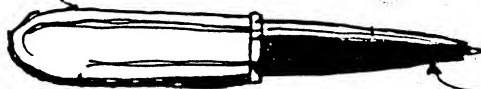


BLACK BUTTON. MARCH, 1946 KIMBERLY BALLPOINT

\$19.95

③ (POCKETTE)

KIMBERLY CORPORATION, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA



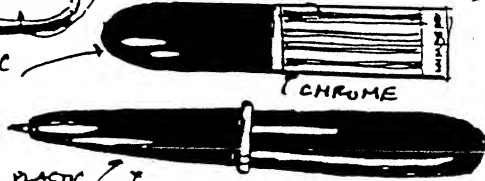
KIMBERLY U.S.A.

\$9.75

KIMBERLY: (EVENTUALLY BOUGHT BY EVERSHARP)

YOU HOLD IT LIKE A PENCIL - AND IT WRITES LIKE A PEN

PLASTIC ALUMINUM (FRICTION CAP)



CHROME KIMBERLY CALIFORNIA PEN (SOLD BY EVERSHARP)

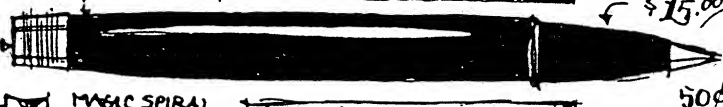
\$12.50

1943: ETERPEN S.A. FOUNDER. 1ST MODEL: STRATOPEN.

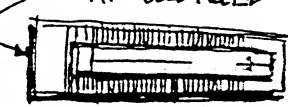
SILVER-PLATED BRASS.

14K GOLD-FILLED

APRIL, 1946 ④ EVERSHARP C.A.



\$15.00



EVERSHARP 1/10" MK 26.F. MADE IN USA

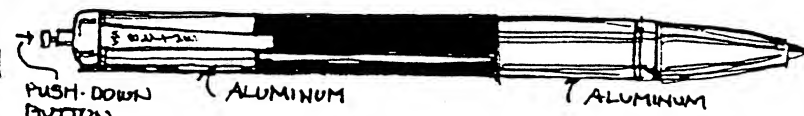
CA\*

CAPILLARY ACTION.

MAY, 1946 BLYTHE 1ST AMERICAN MADE RETRACTABLE BALLPOINT.

⑥ MADE BY THE BALL PEN COMPANY OF HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA

\$9.95



(SOME HAD ENGRAVED NAMES ON BARREL)

APRIL, 1946

⑤ 2ND REYNOLDS BALLPOINT

REYNOLDS

CLIP



"100" PEN

\$12.50

© 1939 FRED PLEWA

INTERCHANGEABLE CAP.

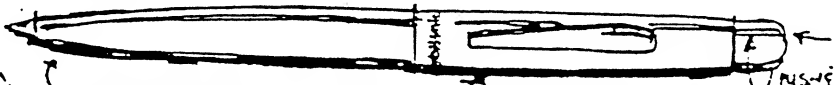


JUNE, 1946 ⑦ EVERSHARP-FABER NO. 1

\$15.00



AUGUST, 1946 ⑧ SHEAFFER STRATOWRITER



SHEAFFER'S MADE IN U.S.A.

PLAIN CLIP.

(Special Thanks to Fred Plewa for permission to reprint this feature)

# U S B C C

## United States Ballpen Collector's Club Magazine

11402 North 45th Place, Phoenix, Arizona 85028

Henry Gostony - Founder

Peter Wichert - President

Vol. 1, No. 2

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### Future of Club?

In getting ready to write this piece, I took out my shoe box filled with early ballpens and started looking at them. They're really unique items -- very sturdy, usually awkward and totally nonfunctional. These items are great fun to play with and admire. They truly started a revolution.

Which brings me to the point. Early ballpens really deserve to have a place in the collectibles field. They are historic. In a way, when you hold one of these pens with its sturdy gold-filled case or aluminum body -- these items so derided by many advanced collectors -- you feel like you're holding a piece of history which others have not yet come to appreciate.

We who are members of the USBCC have a real opportunity to make collectible history...and to write it. This is the only club in the

world that I know of that exclusively focuses on ballpens.

But unless you step up right now to pitch in, we may descend into a long dark period where this entire field disappears from sight -- perhaps for a while -- perhaps forever.

I am no longer able to carry the ball for everyone. I started this club, Peter Wichert pitched in and Mike Purvis set up the computer software and hardware which makes this entire publication possible. Peter is soon to be off to Budapest to teach business to the Hungarians. He cannot contribute as in the past. And that leaves me.

An odd phenomena occurred in the organization of the club and the creation of the USBCC publication. Before Peter put out the first issue (Fall 1991) I was getting letters and telephone calls from people who had joined wanting to know when the issue would come out. One gentleman demanded his ten dollars back. Even Peter hounded me to get the issue out.

Finally, I asked Peter if he could do it and he agreed. It took him almost three months after he started. Of course he had many setbacks such as a crashed hard drive, several extra and unexpected classes to teach, a contributor who was supposed to do an article on the Fisher pen who never came through and so on. All this while I was getting calls and letters from all over the country as

to when we would be going to press. And then the first issue came out. What happened next? Nothing! The people who "hounded" us just stopped calling and writing. We did receive compliments from people we know and we do appreciate that!

OK. You paid your \$10 dues and this is the second issue we promised. Where do we go from here? Peter can't do the quarterly publication and personal commitments (including writing for *Pen World*, two jobs, a family - including a two-year old son and a 10-year old daughter - and fountain pen collecting) make it impossible for me to shoulder the responsibility for putting out the newsletter.

What I want to do is turn the reins over to someone (or a group of people) interested in carrying on. Of course, I am willing to continue to contribute. On the other hand, we could possibly merge with another club.

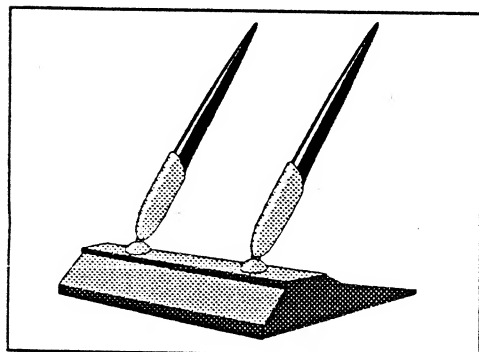
If you want to take on the responsibility for running the USBCC or production of the USBCC publication or know of a some other solution, please contact me at the address on the letterhead so we can keep the club alive. (If you must call, I can't take or make calls during the day as my employment doesn't allow this, so please call on the weekend at (602) 953-1659.) **Don't expect "the other guy" to do it.** There may not be any other guy. We've got a good thing going. Let's not throw it away! It's really up to you entirely!

**COVER:** Eversharp Kimberly Pockette ballpoint pen compared to the size of a cigarette by Humphrey Bogart in a 1948 advertisement.

## Ballpoint Collectors Have Many Interests

Many of the people who collect ballpens have other interests. A list of some of those interests is included below so other members that have a similar interest can eventually communicate with each other.

- Airline collectibles
- Baseball cards
- Bicycles and related items
- Birds
- Coins
- Comic books
- Fountain pens
- Inks
- Inkwells
- Mechanical pencils
- Metal detecting
- Model cars
- Model trains
- Old aviation magazines, especially pulp air stories
- Old tin tobacco tins
- Pins
- Pocket knives
- Porcelain flight covers
- Stamps
- Toy trains
- Travels to Eastern Europe
- Warning devices for fire apparatus and other fire related equipment



## Letters

*We've received a great number of very interesting letters which indicate the high level of intelligence and interest of our members.*

Dear USBCC,

I am not yet a collector but I have gathered a lot of information from memory about ballpoint pen legend. A schoolmate in the mid-1940's had one of the first "Reynold's Rockets" ("Do you have a *Rocket* in your pocket?") and I owned one of the first lower priced rockets when they were released in late 1946. They even came with a spatted type landing gear that acted as a pen stand. The cost of that pen was \$3. My father and a friend were instrumental in getting Folger's coffee to market cheap ball point pens throughout grocery stores. My father was a grocer in southern Oregon and his friend was a Folger's representative. Then my wife's uncle was an engineer (later for the aerospace industry) but during the late 1940's or early 1950's, he helped tool up the B-B Pen Company in Los Angeles. "BB" I was told stood for Bob Blythe and the firm was said to be the company that finally sold banks on using ballpoint pens instead of the scratchy old metal straight dip pens. I remember magazine ads that advertised a small southern Californian Bank that was now using ballpoint pens. At one time, as I recall, there was an old wife's tale that ballpoints were illegal for legal transactions.

*(This may very well have been true for a period of time until ballpen inks were perfected as some were*

*even known to turn invisible after a few days - Editor.)*

My information, as I mentioned, comes largely from memory, so I am sure there are lots of holes in it. Memories do tricks...but I do have an interest in the history of the ballpoint pen.

Sincerely,  
Keith Gebers, Elk Grove, CA

Dear Mr. Gebers,

*Thanks for sharing your first-hand knowledge of the development and use of the first ball point pens. This is the type of interaction that makes this hobby so interesting and worthwhile. In a way, it makes history come alive for us and is a way of passing on a way of life that many of us never had the pleasure of sharing. Thank you again!*

Dear USBCC,

In my search for fountain pens, I have "come across" and purchased a number of early ballpoint pens. Although my primary interest is in the collecting of fountain pens, the development of ballpoint pens shares this history and is, therefore, also of interest to me.

Sincerely,  
Martin O. Allstrup  
Waukesha, WI

Dear Martin,

*We've received other comments from USBCC members that indicate that in the course of collecting fountain pens and other items they've picked up early ballpoints. By the way, a*

*list of the many other things that our members collect is presented in this issue entitled **Ballpoint Collectors Have Many Interests.***

Dear USBCC,

Although I'm not knowledgeable enough to write articles, I'd be glad to help out in other ways. I have a nice computer setup.

Mark Eskew  
Dallas, Texas

Dear Mark,

*Who really is knowledgeable? This is a new field. You're really as capable as anyone. Please see the lead editorial for this issue entitled **Future of Club?** Someone has to take over the function of editor of the newsletter. In this type of club where everyone lives in a different state, one person can make the difference between the club growing or dying!*

Dear USBCC,

I've recently read your advertisement in *Pen World* regarding a Ballpoint Collector's Club. I think it's a fantastic idea! I am obviously a pen collector and have over two thousand ballpens. I was wondering if it would be possible for me to join your club? Do you accept overseas members?

Ms. Anne Wright  
Melbourne, Australia

Dear Ms. Wright,

*Yes, we accept overseas members, but at this stage have not yet figured out what the cost is in terms of postage. Although we've received inquiries from Europe, Canada and Puerto Rico, for some reason none of these folks have joined...could the 1991 dues of \$10 been too steep?*

Dear USBCC,

I am a collector of writing instruments....I find that the pen market has become engorged with collectors whose only real purpose is to turn over a quick buck. Subsequently, I find myself no longer trying to purchase fountain pens from the past, but instead if I am going to buy pens, they are from the present and are new and workable.

Very Truly Yours,  
Leonard Tashman, Palm Beach, FL

Dear Leonard,

*We've received many comments to the effect that it's refreshing that the collecting of ballpens is so noncommercial. Although ballpens will continue to increase in monetary value, our members tend to be sincerely interested in them for their intrinsic value.*

Dear USBCC,

How about a limited edition pen from a prestige company such as Parker or Mont Blanc with a stone cabochon or sterling filigree or engraved? I suspect that Parker could come up with a prestige item. I would also see if Mont Blanc or

Cross would like the honor of producing the first pen for the club. The person in charge of the publicity department of the pen companies should be asked, "Who will have the honor of designing the first pen for USBCC?"

Arthur M. Gay  
Arlington, Texas

Dear Mr. Gay,

*Peter Wichert investigated the possibility of producing limited edition pens for the club. It is indeed possible to get a pen specially inscribed by the manufacturer if at least 50 are ordered. About 75 percent of our members indicated an interest in purchasing special edition ballpens specially made for the USBCC. If the club continues (please see the lead article for this issue entitled **Future of Club?**) in existence, this is definitely something we can look into.*

*Your Letters are always appreciated and offer perspective as to why members are interested in ballpens. We encourage you to write and should the USBCC continue (see **Future of Club?**) would be a regular feature - Editor.*





Trading Post

**WANTED:** I desire a 1946-50 Sheaffer's ballpoint as originally offered in Crest, Triumph and Sentenial three-piece sets. Also, a 14kt gold-filled Stratowriter retractable ballpoint. In Eversharp I need a "Kimberly Pockette" and a Desk Pac Set.

Mr. J.R. Wyman  
950 S. Sweetwater Drive  
P.O. Box 7033  
Pueblo West, CO 81077-0033

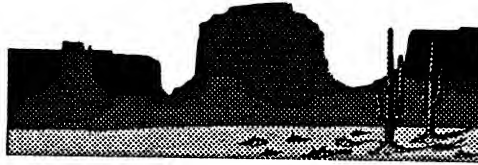
*(Please see the cover of this issue on which we have reproduced a 1948 advertisement for the Kimberly with Humphrey Bogart comparing the pen to a cigarette - Editor.)*

**WANTED:** "Everglide Robot Pen," all brass with flat clip, pen writes when it is inverted, refill falling out of the top, circa 1954, used for advertising. Original blythe design like this also sought. Also wanted: 1950-1960 European and Japanese ballpoints.

Dennis Stouffer  
430 W. Hillcrest street  
Inglewood, CA. 90301  
(213) 334-0475 (days)  
(213) 677-5377 (evenings)

**FOR SALE:** Green Marble Parker Duofold. This green was a special run. it's a ballpoint, it's new in the box and sold for \$150. any reasonable offer will be accepted.

Barry Carpenter  
P.O.Box 737  
Union, Oregon 97883  
(503) 562-6171



Thanks

To Fred Plewa for submitting some original artwork to which he owns the copyright.

To Mike Purvis for assembling, word processing, and proofing this magazine.

To Bob Tefft for his inquiry concerning this issue's Backpage "Mystery Pen".

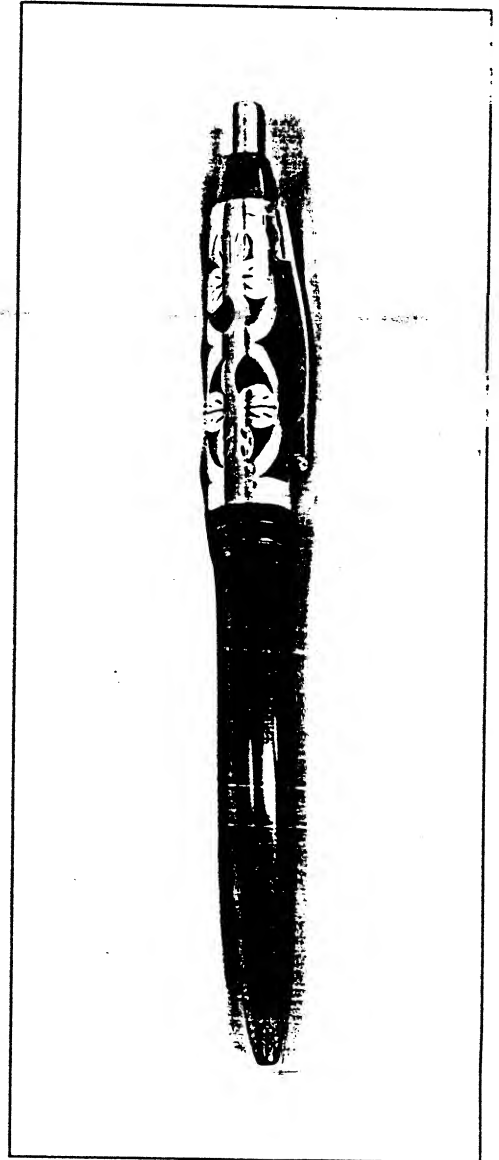
To Peter Wichert for his ideas and contributions and for reproduction s of the original 1945 and 1951 Consumer Reports on ballpens.

To Frank Dubiel for the 1958 Waterman-Bic Pen Corporation ad which is significant in that it demonstrates that BIC (the ballpen manufacturer) used the Waterman name after it purchased Waterman although its real intent was probably to dismantle Waterman as a competitor.

Rare Ballpen Overlay

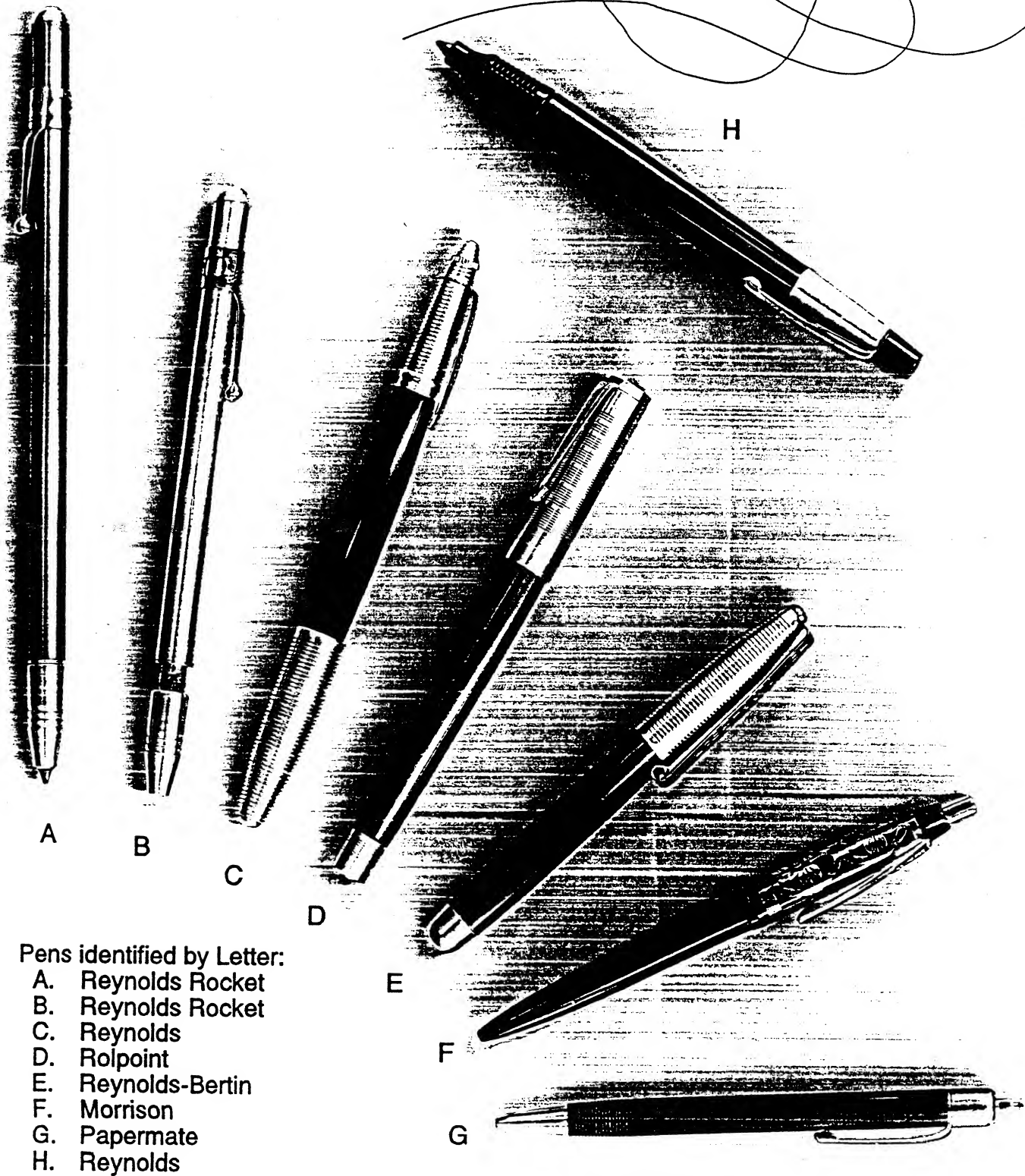
Morrison made a solid sterling silver filigree overlay ballpen. The overlay is similar to that made by Morrison in the 1920s and by Conclun and other fountain pen companies. Finding it was quite a surprise. One day it may rival the Parker "Snake" pen in desirability.

NOW AVAILABLE FOR SALE. ALL OFFERS ACCEPTED OVER \$15,000 IN INCREMENTS OF \$250 OVER THE PREVIOUS BID. THE IDENTITY OF THE BIDDERS WILL NOT BE DISCLOSED. BIDDING CLOSES FEBRUARY 15, 1992. NEEDS REFILL. NEAR MINT CONDITION. WIRE TRANSFERS ACCEPTED.



Morrison Filigree Overlay Ballpen  
(Actual size)

# A Potpourri of Pens



Pens identified by Letter:

- A. Reynolds Rocket
- B. Reynolds Rocket
- C. Reynolds
- D. Rolpoint
- E. Reynolds-Bertin
- F. Morrison
- G. Papermate
- H. Reynolds

(Reprinted from the November 1945 Issue of Consumer Reports)

## Two-Year Pen

*The new "miracle" pen is guaranteed to write two years without refilling, to write in the stratosphere and under water, but it may let you down at your writing desk*

A fountain pen that is guaranteed to write for two years without refilling is the latest postwar product to hit the stores. And despite the skeptical reaction of most consumers to this newest of miracles, let it be said at once that the pen is no phony. Whether it will actually write for two years without refilling is something that CU's preliminary tests (the pen has been on sale for only a week as this goes to press) cannot disclose; but it writes, the design is sound, and if the ink—which resembles thick printer's ink—retains its original state, the pen may indeed give most users two years of writing with one ink load.

The pen is called *Reynolds International*, and it sells for \$12.50. At the moment, the only seller seems to be Gimbels Department Store, though presumably it will soon go on sale elsewhere. Gimbels guarantees that it will replace the pen if it fails to write within two years after purchase. According to the trade press, Eversharp and Eberhard Faber will offer a similar pen after January 1st.

### WONDERFUL—BUT

Other advantages claimed by the makers were confirmed by CU's tests of three samples of the pens. It doesn't leak or drip, even when shaken; writing dries at once and does not require blotting; it makes

excellent carbon copies; it can be used to write on cloth and on paper which blots with ordinary ink.

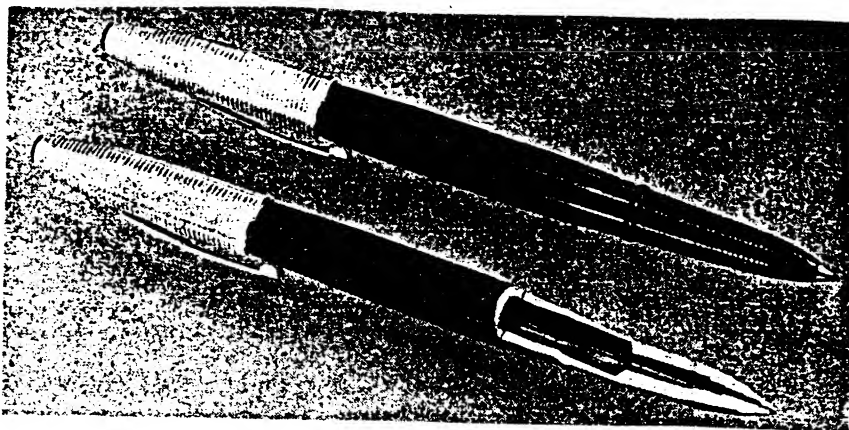
All of which is very wonderful. But don't rush out to buy the pen for yourself or as a Christmas gift without reading further. The *Reynolds* pen does write, but the chances are that you won't like the appearance of the writing. Since the tip is not a flexible point, but a tiny ball of steel, it gives a line of rather characterless uniformity. The line is fine when you write on a hard surface, rather heavier on a soft surface. More important is the fact that none of the three pens tested gave lines of consistent color or evenness. Sometimes they wrote dark, sometimes light; and sometimes the line had intermittent appearance—almost like very closely spaced dots. At times—particularly on small writing—the pens were

temperamental, writing with a broken line or refusing to write at all for the space of a letter or two at a time. This difficulty may be due to lack of uniformity in the ink; if this is the case, the manufacturers may later find a way to overcome it.

Essentially, the pen consists of a hollow aluminum tube with a tapered end. Into this end is fitted a brass bearing which holds a tiny steel ball (about one twenty-fifth of an inch in diameter). As the pen writes, the ball revolves freely. Since the ink in the pen is in contact with the back of the ball, as the ball revolves it carries a very thin film of ink around to the writing surface.

### HOW IT WRITES

The ink is deposited — actually "rolled" — on the surface fibers of the paper, and does not, like ordinary writing ink, soak into the body of the paper. The ink has high covering power, so that the rate of ink use is very low; hence the long interval between refillings. The company does not sell ink directly, but it will refill your pen for 50c



*A cutaway of the Reynolds pen shows how it differs from an ordinary pen. The "point" is a tiny steel ball bearing. Filled with very thick ink, the pen is said to write for two years without refilling.*



## THE SOUTH AMERICAN WAY

For many months, trade papers have been hinting about a pen similar to the *Reynolds*, on the market in South America. CU consultants had the opportunity to examine a "refugee" model of such a pen, made in Argentina. Inspection showed the South American edition to have several advantages over the *Reynolds*:

1. It appeared to write more smoothly and less intermittently than the *Reynolds*.

2. It was smaller and lighter; less clumsy to use.

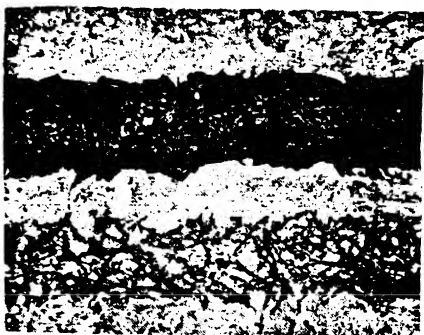
3. It needed no cap; instead, the point could be retracted or advanced into writing position by simple pressure on a button.

4. Its appearance was superior to that of the *Reynolds*.

CU advises you to wait, if you can, for a U. S. edition of this South American pen.

after the initial two-year period (during which you are guaranteed a new pen without charge if the ink runs out). Or, if you don't want to wait for back-and-forth shipment to the factory to have your pen refilled, you can exchange your empty pen for a full one on payment of a dollar.

If you do buy a *Reynolds*, and don't want the bother of taking it back for exchange in a relatively



*Under the microscope: The fluid ink of an ordinary pen line (top) soaks into paper fibers; the heavy ink of the Reynolds makes a line which coats only the surface (below).*

short time, unscrew the top of the pen in the store, and inspect the ink chamber to make sure that it is reasonably full. Of the three pens that CU bought, one was full, one was about half-full, and in the third, only about a quarter of the ink chamber was filled. To check for fullness, look into the ink chamber for a small metal cylinder, resting on top of the ink column; it should be near the top of the chamber.

The ink, as already pointed out, is of the consistency of heavy printer's ink. The only color now available is blue.

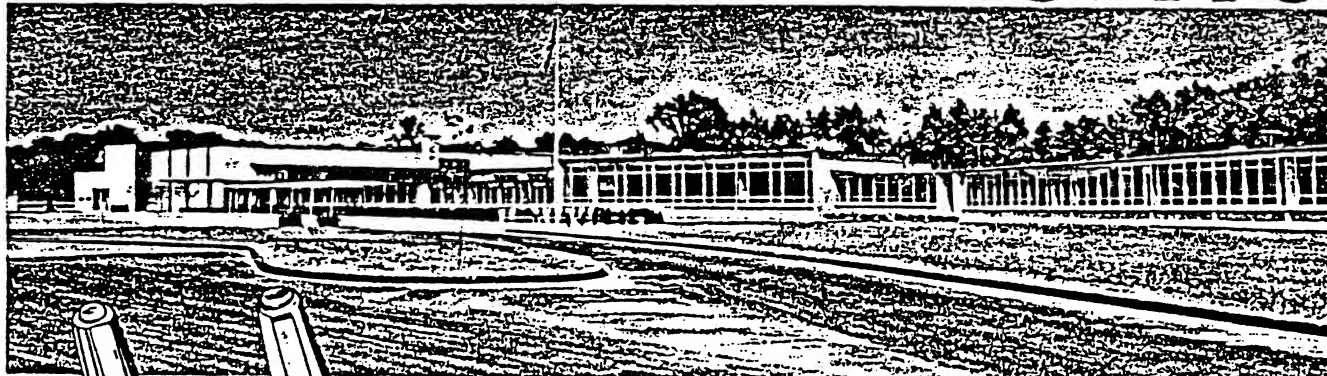
At this stage of the pen's development, it is CU's opinion that the *Reynolds International* is not a good buy for most persons. There are exceptions, however. If you want to make carbon copies with an ink-written original, it may be a good buy for you. If you need a pen that will write on rough paper, you may like it. If you spend a lot of your time flying around in the stratosphere, and want a pen that won't leak there, this one is an excellent bet. The makers guarantee that it will write under water; if you insist on doing your correspondence while you're doing deep-sea diving, this certainly is the pen for you.

CU's consultants estimate that the cost of the pen (without the desk holder and the package) is about a dollar. If this is correct, the \$12.50 price represents about the usual mark-up in the fountain pen field.

17 021  
"BACK-TO-SCHOOL"

# LARGER PROFITS

MEANS:



# FASTER TURNOVER

FOR YOU!

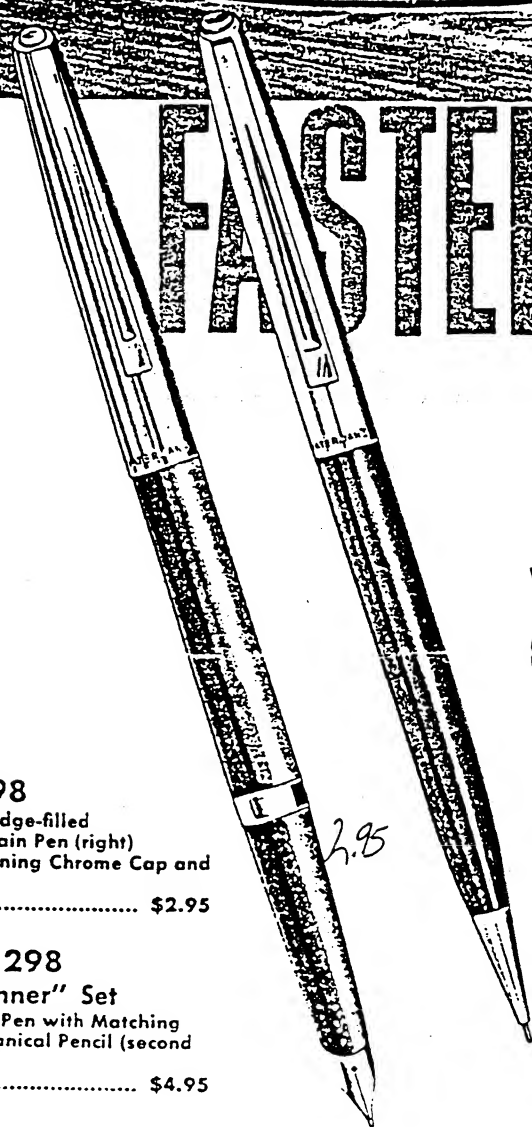
with **Waterman's**  
Cartridge-filled Fountain Pens  
and Matching Pencil Sets

## #298

Cartridge-filled  
Fountain Pen (right)  
Glistening Chrome Cap and  
Clip  
List ..... \$2.95

## TX 298

"Winner" Set  
#298 Pen with Matching  
Mechanical Pencil (second  
right)  
List ..... \$4.95



Unexcelled Waterman Quality PLUS Clean, Instant Cartridge-Filling make the #298 and TX 298 the "most called for" Pens and Sets in the Store.

Colors: Black, Red, Blue, Green

Points: Medium and Fine

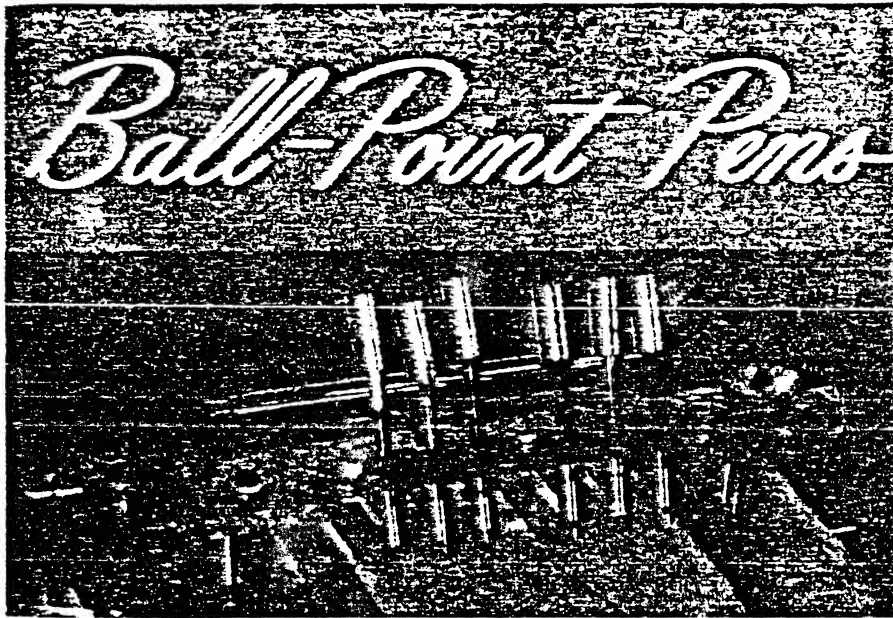
Packaging: Each Pen or Set is individually packed in attractive Gift Box containing Two FREE Ink Cartridges.

NOTE: See other side for Special "Back-to-School" Counter Displays



WATERMAN - BIC PEN CORPORATION,

SEYMOUR, CONN.



CU used this automatic writing machine to measure the writing time of each pen tested. Weights on the pens are used to simulate pressure applied in normal use.

*They have been improved  
over the years,  
but many still don't work  
well, CU's tests  
of 23 models show*

Tests of 23 models of ball-point pens showed that many of them are better writing instruments than similar pens CU tested two years ago.

Among the Acceptable models, the good ones were judged quite suitable for daily use, provided you have use for a ball-point pen. As compared with fountain pens, writing produced with a ball-point pen is lacking in character. Furthermore, some users find ball-point pens relatively difficult to write with. On the other hand, ball-point pens have some advantages over conventional fountain pens. Perhaps the chief advantage is that they write for many hours without requiring refilling. Ball-point pens can produce carbon copies from an original written with ink. You can leave the cap off ball-point pens without fear that the writing tip will dry. And pens of this type can survive rougher treatment than can the ordinary fountain pen.

But even the best ball-point pens CU tested have their limitations. The writing they produce has some tendency to smear, and the ink leakage tends to stain fingers and clothing. The ink in a number of pens penetrates some papers completely that only one side of the sheet can be used. Since the manufacture of uniformly good ball-point pens is a high-precision job there was variation in writing quality from pen to pen within a brand. In some cases, this variation was more pronounced than in others.

A low-priced brand which is variable may still be a good buy if you try several and select a good one—as you should with any ball-point pen—before you buy it. A precautionary test should include writing a few lines and drawing a series of loops. Make certain that the particular pen you

select writes evenly and smoothly, with an even flow of ink, and that it shows no tendency to skip portions of the strokes. You will probably improve your chances of getting a good pen if you select one of the brands which precede *Weaver* in the ratings—*Sheaffer's*, *Waterman's* or the *Paper Mate*. *Sheaffer's*, which leads CU's ratings, has a *Fineline* model priced at \$1.50. *Sheaffer* pens use, as do some others, the same refill in all models; consequently, all models in this brand offer the same writing quality regardless of price. (The refill, or cartridge, contains both the ink supply and the writing tip.) What you may obtain in a higher priced model is a better body, more ornate trim, and possibly better construction features. The *Sheaffer's Stratowriter Retractable*, at \$15 offers a gold-filled body, a retractable point and an excellent pocket clip, but it writes no better than the \$1.50 *Sheaffer's Fineline* or the \$3.25 *Sheaffer's Craftsman*.

All the ball-point pens tested except *Scripto* were refillable, and refills for them were available. *Fieldston* offers refills for brands other than its own. CU tested a number of *Fieldston* refills for other brands and found them, like the *Fieldston* models themselves, Not Acceptable due to leakage.

On the basis of CU's tests (from six to twelve samples of each model were tested) it is possible to answer some of the questions you may have in mind when buying a ball-point pen; for example, the following:

*Will it leak on hot days?*

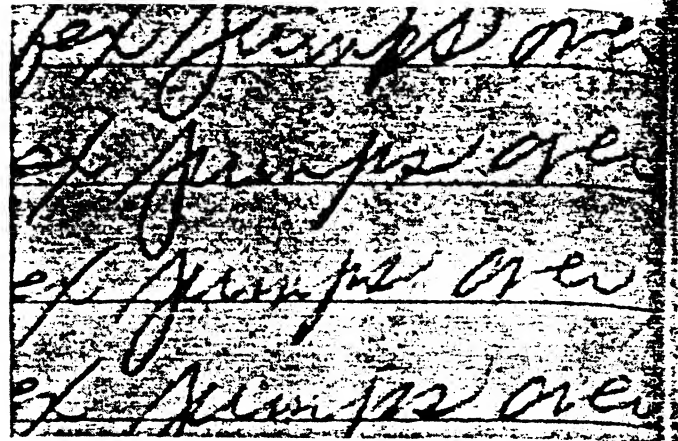
CU kept at least six pens of each model requiring a dif-

*Continued on next page*

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Scripto was one of the three Acceptable pens which had more than average tendency to "strike-through." Its ink penetrated to the reverse side of the paper, as shown in photograph



Poor writing quality in a ball-point pen is shown in the writing sample above. Note the uneven writing, composed of alternate light and dark strokes, as well as ink blobs

## BALL-POINT PENS continued

ferent refill vertically suspended for 24 hours in an oven kept at 95°F. Some samples of every model, except the *Waterman's* and *Paper Mate*, showed some ink seepage around the ball-point tips. In most cases, however, this seepage was extremely slight; models showing greater leakage were downgraded accordingly. Large leaks did develop in eight models representing the following brands: *Eagle*, *Eversharp*, *Fieldston* and *Flo-Ball*; these were rated Not Acceptable.

### Will it leak if I take it up in an airplane?

CU's tests simulated an altitude of 20,000 feet, and a flight time of 24 hours. The low pressure did not cause any of the models to leak.

### How long will it write before I need another refill?

CU tested at least six refills of each of the brands in an automatic writing machine to determine the writing life of each model.

The *Sheaffer's* models, with an average writing time of 198 hours, had more than three times the writing life of the largest capacity pen CU tested in 1949. Poorest of all, in terms of ink supply, were the *B-B* samples, with an average writing time of 28 hours, and *Ink-O-Graph* No. 14 with an average of 31 hours.

### My last ball-point pen wrote very badly. Will this one do better?

Chances are it will. When pens of this type were last tested, the average writing quality of the samples was considerably below those tested this year. In these tests, hand-written and machine-written specimens for each model were examined after each hour on the writing machine, until the ink supply was exhausted. *Sheaffer's* received the highest score in writing quality, with *Waterman's* next; *Scripto* was the poorest of all Acceptable brands in this respect.

### Does writing done with ball-point pens tend to fade?

CU simulated exposure to direct sunlight by testing writ-

ing specimens of each brand in a Fade-O-Meter. The *Sheaffer's*, *Waterman's*, *Paper Mate* and *Wearer Miracle* produced writing which withstood the equivalent of 60 hours under direct sunlight without serious fading; the writing from other Acceptable models faded in shorter periods. The poorest in this respect was the *Scripto*, whose writing faded after exposure to the equivalent of less than ten hours of sunlight.

### If the writing gets wet, will it wash out?

After 24 hours of immersion in water, the writing of all the Acceptable models was still legible, though there was some "bleeding" from all except the *B-B* models, which showed no bleeding at all.

### If I do get any ink on my clothes, will it wash out?

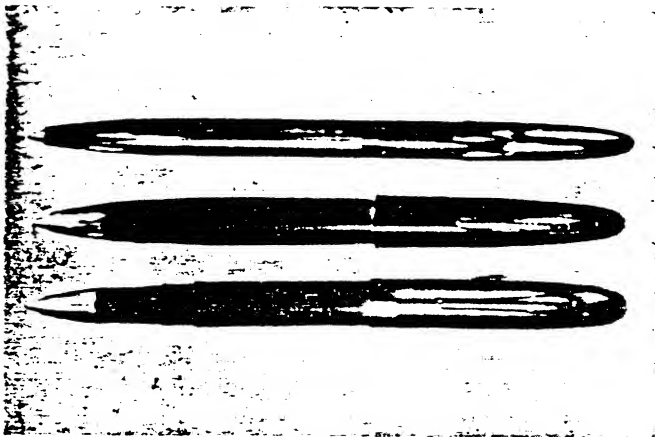
In the case of most ball-point pen inks, no, judging by those CU tested. In only one case, *Paper Mate*, were ink stains removed successfully by washing. Stain tests were made with white cotton and with woolen cloth; washing was done with a home washing machine and a synthetic detergent. The unique washability of the *Paper Mate's* ink makes the pen a good bet for a school child who might manage to get his clothes stained even if he does his writing with a non-leaking pen.

### Is it true that writing done with a ball-point pen tends to smear?

The fact that it could be smeared to some extent was a common flaw in most of the writing done with the ball-point pens CU tested. Here again, *Paper Mate* was the notable exception: its writing could barely be smeared after ten seconds. This would be a definite advantage in a pen intended for use on notebooks, or record books which must be thumbed through frequently.

### Will the writing show through on the reverse side of the paper?

This failing, known as "strike-through," was less pronounced in this year's test of ball-point pens than in previous tests. Only three Acceptable models showed considerable strike-through, and this has been noted in the ratings.



Sheaffer's pens, which led CU's ratings, use the same refill on all models. The gold-filled Stratowriter Retractable, \$15 (top) writes no better than the \$3.25 Craftsman or the \$1.50 Finline



Eight of the 23 ball-point pen models CU tested were rated Not Acceptable because of excessive leakage. Ink from leaky ball-point pens tends to smear fingers and to soil clothes

**RATINGS OF 23 BALL-POINT PENS:** Listings, based on tests of six to twelve samples of each brand, are in order of overall quality based on writing characteristics, writing time, tendency of ink to leak, smear, or strike-through, resistance to sun fading, water resistance, and quality of clips and retracting mechanism. Unless otherwise noted, the pens were refillable and non-retractable; they used blue ink. Outstandingly good or poor features are noted in the ratings. Differences in quality between adjacent listings were small. Prices are manufacturers' list prices in the spring of 1951.

**ACCEPTABLE**

■ **SHEAFFER'S STRATOWRITER RETRACTABLE** (W. A. Sheaffer Pen Co., Fort Madison, Iowa). \$15. Including Federal tax. Gold-filled case. Retractable. Refill \$1. Average writing time 198 hours. Longest writing time of all pens tested. Maintained good writing quality practically throughout the life of the cartridge. Excellent pocket clip.

■ **SHEAFFER'S FINELINE** (W. A. Sheaffer Pen Co.). \$1.50. Uses same refill as the *Sheaffer's Stratowriter Retractable*, above.

■ **SHEAFFER'S FINELINE SMOOTHIE** (W. A. Sheaffer Pen Co.). \$1.50. Short size with no pocket clip. Uses same refill as *Sheaffer's Stratowriter Retractable*, above.

■ **SHEAFFER'S CRAFTSMAN STRATOWRITER** (W. A. Sheaffer Pen Co.). \$3.25. Uses same refill as *Sheaffer's Stratowriter Retractable*, above.

■ **WATERMAN'S BALL POINTER** (L. E. Waterman Co., NYC). \$1. Refill 50¢. Average writing time 82 hours. Available in short size with no clip for same price.

■ **"PAPER MATE"** (Frawley Corp., San Francisco). 97¢. Retractable. Refill 49¢. Average writing time 56 hours. Only pen tested whose ink dried in a few seconds so that it could be readily smudged. *Paper Mate* was the only pen with which ink stains could be washed out of clothing.

■ **WEAVER MIRACLE** No. 915 (David Kahn, Inc., North Bergen, N. J.). 39¢. Refill 19¢. Average writing time 87 hours.

■ **B-B "SIR DOUGLAS"** No. 823 (B-B Pen Co., Hollywood). 98¢. Refill 49¢. Average writing time 28 hours. Excellent resistance to water soaking.

■ **B-B "EXECUTIVE"** No. 223 (B-B Pen Co.). 98¢. Uses same refill as "*Sir Douglas*" above. Rather poor pocket clip.

■ **B-B "SPORTY"** No. 117 (B-B Pen Co.). 98¢. Short size. Uses same refill as "*Sir Douglas*" above. Poor pocket clip.

■ **INK-O-GRAPH** No. 6 (Inkograph Co., NYC). \$1. Refill 35¢. Average writing time 108 hours. Rather poor resistance to light fading. Tendency to strike through.

■ **UNIVERSAL "BUCK"** (Universal Pen & Pencil Co., NYC). \$1. Refill 29¢. Average writing time 65 hours. Rather poor resistance to light fading.

■ **INK-O-GRAPH** No. 14 (Inkograph Co.). \$1. Refill 35¢. Average writing time 31 hours. Short size. Available with no pocket clip for same price. Rather poor resistance to light fading. Tendency to strike through.

■ **SCRIPTO** (Scripto, Inc., Atlanta). 25¢. Non-refillable. Average writing time 43 hours. Lowest writing quality score of pens tested. Very poor resistance to light fading; rather poor clip. Tendency to strike through.

**NOT ACCEPTABLE**

¶ *At least half of the samples of each of the brands listed below failed the leakage test. Listed alphabetically.*

○ **EAGLE FLASH** No. 1200 (Eagle Pencil Co., NYC). 49¢. Refill 19¢

○ **EVERSHARP REPORTER** (Eversharp, Inc., NYC). \$1. Refill 50¢.

○ **FIELDSTON STUDENT** (Fieldston Prod., Corp., NYC). 59¢. Refill 29¢.

○ **FIELDSTON EDITOR** (Fieldston Prod. Corp.). 98¢. Refill 29¢. Uses same refill as *Fieldston Student* above.

○ **FIELDSTON VICTOR** (Fieldston Prod. Corp.). 98¢. Retractable. Refill 39¢.

○ **FLO-BALL "LITTLE JEWEL"** No. 101 (Flo-Ball Pen Corp., NYC). \$1. Refill 50¢. Short size.

○ **FLO-BALL "SENIOR"** No. 100 (Flo-Ball Pen Corp.). \$1. Refill 50¢.

○ **FLO-BALL "STANDARD TRI-TONE"** No. 301 (Flo-Ball Corp.). \$1. Three-color pen. Refill 30¢ for each color (blue, red and green). The three points protrude from the barrel together; color desired can be used by holding the pen in the suitable position.

¶ *The following is not a ball-point pen, but a refill only.*

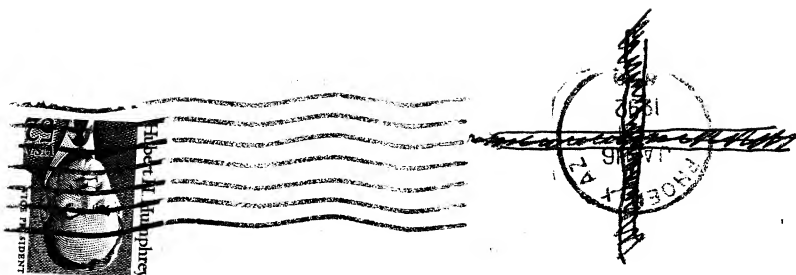
○ **FIELDSTON REFILLS** for other branded pens (Fieldston Prod. Corp.). 35¢. *Fieldston* refills for *Universal*, *B-B Sheaffer's*, *Flo-Ball*, *Waterman's* and *Eversharp* were tested.

¶ *Not Acceptable for reason stated.*

○ **WEAVER TRI-COLOR** No. 920 (David Kahn, Inc.). \$1. Retractable three-color pen. Refill 25¢ for each color (blue, red and green). The retracting mechanism on two of the six pens tested became inoperative in a relatively short time.



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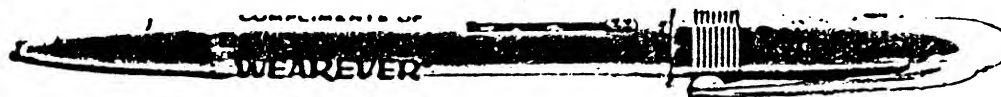
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Spring 1992

Vol. 1, No. 2

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## Mystery Pen



Description: This item is a ballpoint and contains three different refills in red, blue and black. The user could select any of the three colors of ink by means of small slides located in the sides of the pen barrel. The clip is imprinted "USA" and "Wearever". The material appears to be gold plate. The intriguing feature of this piece is the imprint on the pen barrel. It reads:

COMPLIMENTS OF  
DAVID KAHN, INC.  
WEAREVER®  
PENS AND PENCILS

The first two lines of the imprint are in black enamel, "Wearever®" is in red, and the last line is blue. Perhaps this was given away as some sort of promotional campaign.

Readers: The beauty of our hobby is learning about the history and development of ballpens. The pen described on this page is one such example. We would appreciate anyone who has information about this pen to write us and Dr. Robert G. Tefft, 375 Acacia Street, Morro Bay, CA 93442